

THE COMMONWEAL

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WEEKLY; ONE PENNY.

NOTES ON NEWS.

"THEY ordain the unjust to minister justice, and do injury to them that be just." Judges are, like policemen, the paid upholders of things as they are, eager to avenge any onslaught upon property or privilege. So that when Mr. Ernest Parke, editor of the *North London Press*, came before Mr. "Justice" Hawkins and was found "guilty" of libelling a lord, everybody knew that his punishment was not going to be a light one. For it is to be remembered that Mr. Parke was sub-editor of the *Star*, and honoured in that capacity with the fear and hatred of the class whom their servant Hawkins was defending. Whatever quarrel we may have had with the *Star*, or with Mr. Parke himself, for occasional unfairness to Socialism and Socialists, we can have nothing but praise for their part in forcing something more than mere politics upon public attention.

If Mr. Parke had been connected with any other paper than the *Star*—outside of declared Socialist journals—he would have been let off with a quarter of the penalty to which he has been condemned. This was the universal opinion among press-men when they heard the verdict. And that if he had been a Socialist writer the penalty would have been doubled several times over I am equally confident. I do not yet know what his colleagues of the *Star* intend to do in the matter, but I hope that they are going to do something, and that they will allow the Radicals and Socialists of London to help them in doing it.

In the early days of the League, a then comrade raised a laugh upon one occasion by declaring that "his mission in life was to smash the British Empire." He has since become an "extinct volcano," as a contributor to "a contemporary" signs himself, and has apparently neglected his mission for a long time past. But there are innumerable signs that although he is not likely to carry out his threat of smashing the British Empire, the British Empire is fully capable of smashing itself, and further, that it will perform the desirable operation at no very distant date.

Despite the smooth prophecies of the Imperial Federationists, and the loud shouting of the Jingo mob, there can be no doubt in the mind of anybody who watches at all closely the course of Australian affairs that the birth of the Australian Republic is drawing very near; so near that men are counting the possibilities of repression, and preparing for their Bunker Hill. As Chief Justice Lilley, of New South Wales, said the other day :

"In truth, Australian Independence is in the air and in the hearts of men, and although no man can foretell the hour of its birth, its advent sooner or later is sure."

It will be many a long year yet before Australia will satisfy a Socialist by its administration of public affairs; a republic with private property, it will be like France or the United States; but all the same, there will be few Socialists who will not rejoice when the—well! when the republican flag replaces the Union Jack.

Rather different will be the case of the South African Republic, which is also trembling on the verge of actuality; for, in that case the rebellion will be in defence of the right of "whacking their own nigger." Brutal as is the British treatment of all subject races, including their own working-classes, there is yet some restraint imposed by the English Government upon the cruelty of the Africanders towards the poor devils of natives whom they exploit. English or Dutch, Gentile or Jew, whatever the blood may be that runs in the exploiter's veins, it makes no perceptible difference in his attitude towards the "nigger." The white folk of South Africa are nearly as degraded in that respect as those of the Southern States of the Union are now, and would soon be as bad as those were before the war without any very great trouble.

After Australia and South Africa have departed—I don't know much about New Zealand—we may begin to expect the absorption of

the West Indies by the United States. Canada, too, is not far off throwing in her lot with the States—and where will the Empire be then, poor thing? where will the Empire be then?

A Mr. Sidney J. Thomson wrote as follows to the *Pall Mall Gazette* the other day :

"Some weeks ago you published an article on the Aërated Bread Company, and mentioned that the average wage of the waitresses is 9s. a-week. I, as a holder of a few shares in the company, could not at first believe this statement; but subsequent inquiries confirm its truth. It seems to me monstrously unjust that a company earning a dividend equal to 25 per cent. should be satisfied to pay its servants so poorly. It must never be forgotten that every shareholder is himself an employer, and as such is, to the extent of his holding, responsible for the wages paid."

It is evident that he is not far from "finding salvation," and if he can only get his fellow shareholders to agree with him will have done some good in his day and generation.

Amid all the froth and splutter about Mr. Parnell as a co-respondent, there has been only one utterance on the subject which was characterised by anything like sense; and that was the letter of our old friend and foe, Mr. Auberon Herbert, which appeared in the *Pall Mall* the other night, and which we reprint elsewhere. But then Mr. Herbert is honest and fearless, while all others who have written or spoken on the subject, being politicians, are also "formalists, out of fear and base flattery . . . a rout of temporisers, ready to embrace and maintain all that is, or shall be proposed, in hope of preferment."

S.

NEWS FROM NOWHERE: OR, AN EPOCH OF REST.

BEING SOME CHAPTERS FROM A UTOPIAN ROMANCE.

CHAPTER III.—THE GUEST HOUSE AND BREAKFAST THEREIN.

I LINGERED a little behind the others to have a stare at this house, which, as I have told you, stood on the site of my old dwelling.

It was a longish building with its gable ends turned away from the road, and long traceried windows coming rather low down set in the wall that faced us. It was very handsomely built of red brick with a lead roof; and high up above the windows there ran a frieze of figure-subjects in baked clay, very well executed, and designed with a force and directness which I had never noticed in modern work before. The subjects I recognised at once, and indeed was very particularly familiar with them.

However, all this I took in in a minute; for we were presently within doors, and standing in a hall with a floor of marble mosaic and an open timber roof. There were no windows on the side opposite to the river, but arches below leading into chambers, one of which showed a glimpse of a garden beyond, and above them a long space of wall gaily painted (in fresco, I thought) with similar subjects to those of the frieze outside: everything about the place was handsome and generously solid as to material; and though it was not very large (somewhat smaller than Crosbey Hall perhaps), one felt in it that exhilarating sense of space and freedom which satisfactory architecture always gives to an unanxious man who is in the habit of using his eyes.

In this pleasant place, which of course I knew to be the hall of the Guest House, three young women were flitting to and fro. As they were the first of the sex I had seen on this eventful morning, I naturally looked at them very attentively, and found them at least as good as the gardens, the architecture, and the male men. As to their dress, which of course I took note of, I should say that they were decently veiled with drapery and not bundled up with millinery; that they were clothed like women, not upholstered like arm-chairs, as most women of our time are. In short, their dress was somewhat between that of the ancient classical costume and the simpler forms of the fourteenth

century garments, though it was clearly not an imitation of either: the materials were light and gay to suit the season. As to the women themselves, it was pleasant indeed to see them, they were so kind and happy-looking in expression of face, so shapely and well-knit of body, and thoroughly healthy-looking and strong. All were at least comely, and one of them very handsome and regular of feature. They came up to us at once merrily and without the least affectation of shyness, and all three shook hands with me as if I were a friend newly come back from a long journey: though I could not help noticing that they looked askance at my garments; for I had on my clothes of last night, and at the best was never a dressy person.

A word or two from Robert the weaver, and they bustled about on our behoof, and presently came and took us by the hands and led us to a table in the pleasantest corner of the hall, where our breakfast was spread for us; and, as we sat down, one of them hurried out by the chambers aforesaid, and came back again in a little while with a great bunch of roses, very different in size and quality to what Hammersmith had been wont to grow, but very like the produce of an old country garden. She hurried back thence into the buttery, and came back once more with a delicately made glass, into which she put the flowers and set in the midst of our table. One of the others, who had run off also, then came back with a big cabbage-leaf filled with strawberries, some of them barely ripe, and said as she set them on the table, "There, now; I thought of that before I got up this morning; but looking at the stranger here getting into your boat, Dick, put it out of my head; so that I was not before *all* the blackbirds: however, there are a few about as good as you will get them anywhere in Hammersmith this morning."

Robert patted her on the head in a friendly manner; and we fell to on our breakfast, which was simple enough but most delicately cooked, and set on the table with much daintiness. The bread was particularly good, and was of several different kinds, from the big, rather close, dark-coloured, sweet-tasting farmhouse loaf, which was most to my liking, to the thin pipe-stems of wheaten crust, such as I have eaten in Turin.

As I was putting the first mouthfuls into my mouth, my eye caught a carved and gilded inscription on the panelling, behind what we should have called the High Table in an Oxford college hall, and a familiar name in it forced me to read it through. Thus it ran:

"Guests and neighbours, on the site of this Guest-hall once stood the lecture-room of the Hammersmith Branch of the Socialist League. Drink a glass to the memory! May 1962."

It is difficult to tell you how I felt as I read these words, and I suppose my face showed how much I was moved, for both my friends looked curiously at me, and there was silence between us for a little while.

Presently the weaver, who was scarcely so well mannered a man as the ferryman, said to me rather awkwardly:

"Guest, we don't know what to call you: is there any indiscretion in asking you your name?"

"Well," said I, "I have some doubts about it myself; so suppose you call me Guest, which is a family name, you know, and add William to it if you please."

Dick nodded kindly to me; but a shade of anxiousness passed over the weaver's face, and he said—

"I hope you don't mind my asking, but would you tell me where you come from? I am curious about such things for good reasons, literary reasons."

Dick was clearly kicking him underneath the table; but he was not much abashed, and awaited my answer somewhat eagerly. As for me, I was just going to blurt out "Hammersmith," when I thought me what an entanglement of cross purposes that would lead us into; so I took time to invent a lie with circumstance, guarded by a little truth, and said—

"You see, I have been such a long time away from Europe that things seem strange to me now; but I was born and bred on the edge of Epping Forest—Walthamstow and Woodford, to wit."

"A pretty place, too," broke in Dick; "a very jolly place, now that the trees have had time to grow again since the great clearing of houses in 1955."

Quoth the irrepressible weaver: "Dear neighbour, since you knew the Forest some time ago, could you tell me what truth there is in the rumour that in the nineteenth century the trees were all pollards?"

This was catching me on my archaeological natural-history side, and I fell into the trap without any thought of where and when I was; so I began on it, while one of the girls who had been scattering little twigs of lavender and other sweet-smelling herbs about the floor, came near to listen, and stood behind me with her hand on my shoulder, in which she held some of the plant that I used to call balm: its strong sweet smell brought back to my mind my very early days in the kitchen-garden at Woodford, and the large blue plums which grew on the wall beyond the sweet-herb patch,—a connection of memories which all boys will see at once.

I started off: "When I was a boy, and for long after, except for a piece about Queen Elizabeth's Lodge, and for the part about High Beech, the Forest was almost wholly made up of pollard hornbeams mixed with holly thickets. But when the Corporation of London took it over about twenty-five years ago, the topping and lopping, which was a part of the old commoners' rights, came to an end, and the trees were let to grow. But I have not seen the place now for many years, except once when we Leaguers went a-pleasuring to High Beech. I was very much shocked then to see how it was built-over and altered;

and the other day we heard that the philistines were going to landscape-garden it. But what you were saying about the building being stopped and the trees growing is only too good news;—only you know—"

At that point I suddenly remembered Dick's date, and stopped short rather confused. The eager weaver didn't notice my confusion, but said hastily, as if he were almost aware of his breach of good manners, "But, I say, how old are you?"

Dick and the pretty girl both burst out laughing, as if Robert's conduct were excusable on the grounds of eccentricity; and Dick said amidst his laughter:

"Hold hard, Bob; this questioning of guests won't do. Why, much learning is spoiling you. You remind me of the radical cobblers in the silly old novels, who, according to the authors, were prepared to trample down all good manners in the pursuit of utilitarian knowledge. The fact is, I begin to think that you have so muddled your head with mathematics, and with grubbing into those idiotic old books about political economy (he he!), that you scarcely know how to behave. Really, it is about time for you to take to some open-air work, so that you may clear away the cobwebs from your brain."

The weaver only laughed good-humouredly; and the girl went up to him and patted his cheek and said laughingly, "Poor fellow! he was born so."

As for me, I was a little puzzled, but I laughed also, partly for company's sake, and partly with pleasure at their unanxious happiness and good temper; and before Robert could make the excuse to me which he was getting ready, I said:

"But neighbours" (I had caught up that word), "I don't in the least mind answering questions, when I can do so: ask me as many as you please; it's fun for me. I will tell you all about Epping Forest when I was a boy, if you please; and as to my age, I'm not a fine lady, you know, so why shouldn't I tell you? I'm hard on fifty-six."

In spite of the recent lecture on good manners, the weaver could not help giving a long "whew" of astonishment, and the others were so amused by his *naïveté* that the merriment flitted all over their faces, though for courtesy's sake they forbore actual laughter; while I looked from one to the other in a puzzled manner, and at last said:

"Tell me, please, what is amiss: you know I want to learn from you. And please laugh; only tell me."

Well, they *did* laugh, and I joined them again, for the above-stated reasons. But at last the pretty woman said coaxingly—

"Well, well, he *is* rude, poor fellow! but you see I may as well tell you what he is thinking about: he means that you look rather old for your age. But surely there need be no wonder in that, since you have been travelling; and clearly from all you have been saying, in unsocial countries. It has often been said, and no doubt truly, that one ages very quickly if one lives amongst unhappy people. Also they say that southern England is a good place for keeping good looks." She blushed and said: "How old am I, do you think?"

"Well," quoth I, "I have always been told that a woman is as old as she looks, so without offence or flattery, I should say you were twenty."

She laughed merrily, and said, "I am well served out for fishing for compliments, since I have to tell you the truth, to wit, that I am forty-two."

I stared at her, and drew musical laughter from her again; but I might well stare, for there was not a careful line on her face; her skin was as smooth as ivory, her cheeks full and round, her lips as red as the roses she had brought in; her beautiful arms, which she had bared for her work, firm and well-knit from shoulder to wrist. She blushed a little under my gaze, though it was clear that she had taken me for a man of eighty; so to pass it off, I said—

"Well, you see, the old saw is proved right again, and I ought not to have let you tempt me into asking you a rude question."

She laughed again, and said: "Well, lads, old and young, I must get to my work now. We shall be rather busy here presently; and I want to clear it off soon, for I began to read a pretty old book yesterday, and I want to get on with it this morning: so good-bye for the present."

She waved a hand to us, and stepped lightly down the hall, taking (as Scott says) at least part of the sun from our table as she went.

When she was gone, Dick said: "Now, guest; won't you ask a question or two of our friend here? It is only fair that you should have your turn."

"I shall be very glad to answer them," said the weaver.

"If I ask you any questions, sir," said I, "they will not be very severe; but since I hear that you are a weaver, I should like to ask you something about that craft, as I am—or was—interested in it."

"Oh," said he, "I shall not be of much use to you there, I'm afraid. I only do the most mechanical kind of weaving, and am in fact but a poor craftsman, unlike Dick here. Then besides the weaving, I do a little with machine printing and composing, though I am little use at the finer kinds of printing; and moreover machine printing is beginning to die out, along with the waning of the plague of book-making; so I have had to turn to other things that I have a taste for, and have taken to mathematics; and also I am writing a sort of antiquarian book about the peaceable and private history, so to say, of the end of the nineteenth century,—more for the sake of giving a picture of the country before the fighting began than for anything else. That was why I asked you those questions about Epping Forest. You have rather puzzled me, I confess, though your information was so interesting. But later on I hope we may have some more talk together, when our friend Dick isn't here. I know he thinks me rather a grinder, and despises me for not being very deft with my hands: that's

the way nowadays. From what I have read of the nineteenth century literature (and I have read a good deal), it is clear to me that this is a kind of revenge for the stupidity of that day, which despised everybody who could use his hands. But, Dick, old fellow, *Ne quid nimis!* Don't over-do it!"

"Come, now," said Dick, "am I likely to? Am I not the most tolerant man in the world? Am I not quite contented so long as you don't make me learn mathematics, or go into your new science of aesthetics, and let me do a little practical aesthetics with my gold and steel, and the blowpipe and the nice little hammer? But, hillo! here comes another questioner for you, my poor guest. I say, Bob, you must help me to defend him now."

"Here, Boffin," he cried out, after a pause; "here we are, if you must have it!"

WILLIAM MORRIS.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

GERMANY.

The German Social-Democratic party has sustained a heavy loss in the person of comrade Johannes Wedde, who died suddenly last week at Lübeck. He was a clever poet, full of originality and life, whose writings, in the older papers of the party, were signed by the *nom de plume* of "Silvanus." At the time of the suppression of the last Socialist paper at Hamburg, and when all the Socialists who actually were writing for the press were expelled from that town, it was Wedde who at once started the *Hamburger Bürgerzeitung*. An article entitled "Force no Remedy" brought, however, the flourishing paper to a violent end, and Bismarck, not satisfied with the suppression of the organ, had also its editor expelled from Hamburg. Wedde went to Lübeck, where he founded the *Echo*. He was a candidate to the next Reichstag.

Another misfortune has befallen the German Social-Democratic party: Ignaz Auer, formerly member of the Reichstag, has become insane, and it is said that there is but little hope for his recovery.

It is announced in the German papers that the miners of the Lower Rhine district and Westphalia, who lately struck in their thousands, have now put forward a demand for an increase of 50 per cent. in their wages and for an eight hours shift, to be counted from the time of their entering the pit to that of their leaving off work.

The whole of the stokers and coal-trimmers belonging to the vessels lying in the port of Hamburg struck work last Thursday in consequence of the shipowners having reduced the men's wages by ten marks (10s.) a-month. The strike has already increased in magnitude, and appears likely to extend still further.

BELGIUM.

The miners of the basin of Charleroi, after a hard four weeks' struggle, have won the victory over the coalowners: 30,000 workers of Jumet-Gohyssart, Gilly, Dampremy, Chatelet, Chatelineau, Souvet, Fleurus, Fontaine-l'Evêque, Marchiennes-au-Pont, Marcinelle, Montceau-sur-Sambre, Wanfrecies, Baulet, Pont-du-Loup, etc., have compelled their greedy exploiters to reduce the work hours from eleven to ten, and to consent to an increase of their wages according to the raise of the coal prices realised during the year. The miners have been substantially supported by the Socialists of "Vooruit," Ghent, and all the branches of the Belgian Workingmen's Party. The cause of the workers was certainly a good one. In order to prove it, we need only glance for a moment at the following figures, showing how much the shares of the Belgian mineowners have increased from January to December 1889, and then compare these figures with the scanty, ridiculous increase of wages that has been realised by the workers from 1888 to 1889.

Name of Coalpit.	Price of Shares.		Name of Coalpit.	Price of Shares.	
	Jan. 1.	Dec. 30.		Jan. 1.	Dec. 30.
Cockerill ...	Fr. 995	1,280	Spérance et Bonne-Fortune ...	Fr. 617.50	1,350
Marcinelle et Couillet	385	1,165	Fontaine l'Evêque ...	260	635
Angleur ...	300	600	Gosson-Lagasse ...	1,420	2,700
Athus ...	1,000	1,400	Grande Machine à feu	570	1,175
Charleroi ...	580	950	Grand Mabourgn en Sablonne ...	285	520
Spérance-Logdoz ...	95	135	Haine St. Pierre et la Hestre ...	340	755
Halanzy ...	295	580	Hasard ...	98	180
Monceau-sur-Sambre	650	780	Hornu et Wasmes ...	2,025	2,600
Ougrée ...	1,250	1,850	Kessales à Jemeppe	1,585	2,800
Providence ...	1,625	2,065	La Louvière, la Paix	200	560
Thy-le-Château ...	1,025	1,510	Levant du Flénu ...	2,125	3,450
Aulnoy-Vezin ...	350	560	Marihaye à Flémalle Gde. 640	1,360	
Amercœur ...	750	1,270	Mons. Fontaine et Martinet ...	1,675	3,250
Anderlues ...	2,000	3,774	Noël Sart-Culpart à Gilly	225	480
Bonne Espérance et Batterie ...	200	590	Nord de Charleroi ...	850	1,325
Carabinier ...	210	350	Patience et Beaujond	725	1,375
Charbonnages belges	150	420	Poirier (charbonnage du)	700	1,150
Paturages et Wasmes	151	305	Produits du Flénu ...	2,330	4,500
Réunis de Charleroi	165	400	Sacié Madame ...	1,650	2,500
Chevalières à Dour ...	850	1,700	Sars Longchamps ...	550	1,300
Concordis (Charb. réunis)	925	1,250	Trieu Kaisin ...	333	670
Couhant du Flénu ...	210	400			
Courcelles-Nord ...	475	860			
Falnuée ...	405	660			

The average daily wages of the miners for 1888 and 1889 has been as follows (one franc equal 10d.):

	1888.	1889.		1888.	1889.
January ...	Fr. 3.46	Fr. 3.74	July ...	Fr. 3.73	Fr. 4.04
February ...	3.54	3.89	August ...	3.72	4.02
March ...	3.44	4.08	September ...	3.77	4.15
April ...	3.57	3.92	October ...	3.87	4.35
May ...	3.58	3.95	November ...	3.82	4.24
June ...	3.90	4.08	December ...	3.83	4.30

The highest increase has thus been of 48 centimes, or 4d., or 12 per cent., whereas the increase in the shares has been on an average 50 per cent.

But the miners' strike will have a better result still than a reduction of hours and an increase of wages. The miners, having now been convinced that combination alone can help them, have resolved to unite into a vast

miners' union throughout the country, and they have already taken steps for the organisation of a general miners' congress, to be held on the first Sunday of February next, at Jumet, when the following agenda will be discussed: 1. Rules of the Association; 2. Nomination of an Executive; 3. Economical and political platform of the Union; 4. International miners' congress; 5. Eight hours work-day.

The foregoing lines were already written when we were informed that new difficulties had arisen between the workers and the pit-owners. It is now asserted that a general strike will soon be decided upon at Charleroi if the employers refuse to grant the miners 15 or in certain cases 20 per cent. increase instead of 10 per cent. The agitation throughout the whole coal-basin is becoming very serious, and the strikers seem to be utterly dissatisfied at the recent compromise. Numerous secret meetings are being held, and it is said that the Ministers, in a conference held on the 18th inst., decided to send gendarmes and cavalry to the various spots where the strike has broken out afresh. The outlook is altogether very dark.

On the other hand, the strike in the Liège coal district has now completely terminated, but it is asserted that if the miners of the Charleroi basin resort to a general strike the district of Liège will come out "on principle."

At Antwerp, where the Socialist movement has made during the last two years a very considerable progress, the Sailors' Union, numbering nearly one thousand members, has made formal adhesion to the Socialist party.

HOLLAND.

Our Anarchist comrades at Rotterdam publish a new organ for the defence of the workers' interests, under the title of *Arbeiderstolk* (The Workers' Organ). The offices are: Havenstraat, 166, Rotterdam. Good luck to the new combatant!

VICTOR DAVE.

THE PRICE OF FREEDOM.

[At midnight preceding the morning of his execution, Albert R. Parsons' voice rang out clear and proud through the corridors of the gaol as he sang in distinct tones the beautiful ballad, 'Annie Laurie.' The following was prompted by reading the above item in the daily papers, and was printed in the Chicago *Labour Enquirer* during its brief existence.]

THE night is dark about me ;
I hear the midnight bell ;
Before another midnight
It will ring my funeral knell.
It will ring my funeral knell ;
O ! the hours are speeding by
When to win the toilers' freedom
I shall pay the price and die.

To-night my babes are crouching
By their weeping mother's side ;
For his country's sake the father
Leaves his children and his bride.
Leaves his children and his bride,
When men for succour cry.
Then to win the toilers' freedom
I shall pay the price and die.

Pent in a dismal dungeon,
Forbidden to be free,
A slave in chains and prison,
O what were life to me !
O what were life to me !
Speak out, my heart ; reply
That to win the toilers' freedom
I will pay the price and die.

What greater love hath mortal,
For one whom he holds dear,
Than for his sake to gladly
Meet death without a fear !
Meet death without a fear—
Yes, such a love have I,
And to win the toilers' freedom
I pay the price and die.

The night will soon be over ;
For me 'twill be the last ;
And the night of wrong, my country,
From thee shall soon have passed.
From thee shall soon have passed ;
I see the stars on high,
So to win the toilers' freedom
I will pay the price and die.

Weep not above my ashes,
This is no hour for tears,
Let every man stand ready
When he the bugle hears.
When he the bugle hears ;
Let every man reply :
We to win the toilers' freedom
Will pay the price and die !

We have received the *Trades and Labour Advocate* of Sydney (N.S.W.), which, so far as we can tell from the numbers to hand, is a thoroughly sound labour paper on trades-union lines. It is well filled with information on labour matters, and gives a good deal of space to the meetings of the various trades organisations.

SOCIALISM IN LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE.—On Saturday January 11th a conference was held at the rooms of the Liverpool Socialist Society, to discuss the advisability of forming a union of the various Socialist bodies of Lancashire and Yorkshire, for the purpose of arranging for the interchange of public speakers, and generally to consider the best means of carrying on a more effective propaganda. Delegates were present from Sheffield, Salford, Blackburn, Rochdale, and Liverpool. Comrade Reeves (Liverpool) was elected chairman, and some discussion took place as to the proposed line of action; after which comrade W. H. Chapman (Liverpool) proposed: "That in the opinion of this conference it is desirable to form a union of the north-western counties Socialists, to be called 'The North-Western Counties Socialist Union.'" Comrade Sharples (Blackburn) seconded the resolution. After further remarks from comrades Bingham (Sheffield), Horrocks (Salford), and others of the assembled delegates, the following amendment was proposed by Bingham: "That this conference, being of opinion that it is desirable in the interests of Socialist propaganda to facilitate the interchange of speakers between the different centres, at once proceed to draw up a list of probable speakers, and make the best possible arrangements to give effect to that decision." The amendment having been put and carried unanimously, the original motion was withdrawn. Finally it was decided that the secretary of the Liverpool Society (E. C. Chapman) should be appointed general secretary *pro tem.*, in order to draw up a list of lectures; and those societies which are willing to co-operate in this object are requested to send in the necessary particulars as early as possible. At a later hour a conversazione was held, at which a number of pieces of vocal and instrumental music were rendered by members and friends, and a most enjoyable evening was spent; W. H. Chapman, sen., superintended the arrangements for refreshments, etc. On Sunday we held two open-air meetings—the first since the formation of our society. In the morning we met at 11.30 near the Landing Stage, when Reeves, Sharples, and Bingham delivered stirring addresses. In the afternoon Reeves, Creaghe, Bingham, and Horrocks spoke to good effect to a large gathering in the old Haymarket. A considerable quantity of literature was sold, and we are much indebted to our friends from the country for the help they gave us to make a start in this work. We intend holding similar meetings each Sunday in the future.



OFFICES: 24 GREAT QUEEN STREET, LONDON, W.C.

HAVE YOU NOT HEARD HOW IT HAS GONE WITH MANY A CAUSE BEFORE NOW: FIRST, FEW MEN NEED IT; NEXT, MOST MEN CONTEMN IT; LASTLY, ALL MEN ACCEPT IT—AND THE CAUSE IS WON!

THE COMMONWEAL is the official organ of the Socialist League; but, unless definitely so announced by the Editors, no article is to be taken as expressing in more than a general way the views of the League as a body. In accordance with the Manifesto and Statement of Principles of the League, the COMMONWEAL is an exponent of International Revolutionary Socialism. On minor differences of opinion the widest freedom of discussion is maintained. As all articles are signed, no special significance attaches to their position in the paper.

Articles and letters dealing with any phase of the social problem are invited and will meet with earnest consideration. They must be written on one side of the paper only, and accompanied by the name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication. MSS. can only be returned if a stamped directed envelope accompanies them.

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Worker's Friend		Madrid—El Socialista
NEW SOUTH WALES	Paris—Bourse du Travail	Cadiz—El Socialismo
Sydney—Bulletin	Le Proletariat	Barcelona—Revolucion Social
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INDIA	Paris—La Revolte	GERMANY
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Milwaukee—National Reformer	Antwerp—De Werker	SWEDEN
		Stockholm, Social-Demokraten
		Malmo—Arbetet

FABIAN ESSAYS IN SOCIALISM.¹

THIS book is of importance as embodying the views of a society which has been so active in lecturing on behalf of the Socialist movement. Indeed, some time ago many of us thought and said that the Fabians should publish a volume of their lectures; and, without wishing to carp at the present expression of opinions from which we of the Socialist League dissent in some measure, I cannot help wishing that such a volume had appeared about three years ago: for such a book published at that date would have dealt almost wholly with the economical and practical side of the question, and would have formed a kind of text-book for Socialists of all shades of opinion; and illuminated, as it would have been, by the brilliant and attractive style of

some of the present essayists, would have been a most useful weapon of attack on the capitalist position as long as the battle might last; whereas a large part of the present volume is given up to the advocacy of the fantastic and unreal tactic which the Fabian Society has ex-cogitated of late, and which is at best tentative and temporary; is hardly constructed to last longer than the coming into power of the next Liberal government. The result is, that the clear exposition of the first principles of Socialism, and the criticism of the present false society (which latter no one knows how to make more damaging than Mr. Bernard Shaw, e.g.) is set aside for the sake of pushing a theory of tactics, which could not be carried out in practice; and which, if it could be, would still leave us in a position from which we should have to begin our attack on capitalism over again; a position, it may be said, which might be better or might be worse for us than our present one, as far as the actual struggle for the new society is concerned.

Mr. Sydney Webb, to judge from this book, is the leader in this somewhat disastrous move. He seems to enjoy all the humiliations of opportunism, to revel in it, so to say; and, indeed, he would appear to drag some of his fellow-writers somewhat unwillingly behind his chariot wheels. In his hands the *argumentum ad hominem* becomes a rather dangerously double-edged weapon. He is so anxious to prove the commonplace that our present industrial system embraces some of the machinery by means of which a Socialist system might be worked, and that some of the same machinery is used by the present municipalities, and the bureaucratic central government, that his paper tends to produce the impression of one who thinks that we are already in the first stages of socialistic life, all the while that "the poor we have always with us," and that the workers are worse off than they were under the feudal hierarchy. The retort of the enemy is obvious: "If we are already all Socialists, be happy! for we are happy!"

I give Mr. Sydney Webb all credit for sincerity in desiring the destruction of privilege; but it is strange that his rollicking opportunism should blind him to the fact that since he is sincere, the privileged will see through his attempt to hoodwink them into joining his attack on the privilege which is their life; while the discontented miserable workers will be discouraged by being practically told that they are already entering into the fruition of the Promised Land. They may well say: "Is it to be like this society, or something like it? We thought Socialism would be quite unlike our present position; if it is not to be so—." To avoid the disaster of gaining the doubtful alliance of the well-to-do at the expense of losing the support of the poor, it is surely necessary never to cease saying: The test of the realisation of Socialism will be the abolition of poverty.

Let us be clear on this point, that if the municipal Socialism of Mr. Sydney Webb were carried and put in practice, though it should logically (perhaps) lead to the destruction of privilege and poverty, yet historically it may do nothing of the kind; and that at any rate it is not Socialism, as it would still admit of the existence of competing classes. We should remember (as a Socialist said to me the other day) that under the Roman Empire municipal administration reached a pitch which we are very unlikely to come to in England in our day; but it had no destructive effect on the society of that epoch, which was based on chattel slavery and a pauper proletariat fed by the doles of the rich.

Mr. Sydney Webb takes in hand the "historic" basis of Socialism; but he is not more historic than any other of the paper-writers, indeed, less so than Mr. Shaw; his history only begins at the period just before the great industrial revolution of the eighteenth century. The industrial conditions of this period he treats too roughly; so roughly, indeed, as to be both inaccurate and misleading. It is true that some of the industries of the country were carried on in an individualistic way on the surface; but the greater part were under the rule of a most elaborate division of labour system, of which the mediæval workmen knew nothing; and even the Yorkshire weavers (as well described by Mr. Illingworth), though they were masters of their tools, time, and materials within their workshops or houses, worked for a master (usually a neighbouring farmer) who exploited them, though mildly, and who in his turn sold the goods to a factor. The workmen had a world-market behind their backs though they were unconscious of it; the goods were made for profit, not primarily for use. In short, Mr. Sydney Webb has ignored the transition period of industry which began in the sixteenth century with the break up of the Middle Ages, and the shoving out of the people from the land. This transition is treated of by Karl Marx with great care and precision under the name of the "Manufacturing Period" (workshop period we might call it), and some mention of it ought to have been included in Mr. Sydney Webb's "history." I should not have felt bound to call attention to this blemish, however, if it were not, to my mind, another indication of the weak side of Mr. Sydney Webb and his followers; their tendency, namely, to over-estimate the importance of the mechanism of a system of society apart from the end towards which it may be used.

The great machine industries, though they have played an important part in the movement toward Socialism are not an essential condition of its existence; they may be used, as they are now, for the mere enslavement of the workers. They will be so used as long as they last, unless the workers in some form or other revolt against their slavery. On the other hand, as you may have a perfected system of co-operative production in a society of capitalism and wage-slavery, so you may have Socialism or Communism conjointly with a system of (so-called) individualist production. Nay, I feel certain that when the time comes, wherein we have forgotten the period of artificial poverty thrust upon us by capitalism and wage-slavery, the world will

¹ "Fabian Essays in Socialism." 233 pp., bound in cloth with designs by Walter Crane and May Morris. May be ordered from *Commonweal* Office at 6s. post free.

in a large measure return to the individual system which once produced *goods*; a word which our present system has deprived of three parts of its meaning. Fourier put forward his truly inspired doctrine of attractive industry to a world that could not listen to him, so sunken as it was in misery and slavery. In times to come we shall need no social philosopher to tell us that if we cannot make our work attractive we shall still be slaves, even though we have no master but Nature. But to-day the world is still so sunken in misery and slavery, that in this book, honestly devoted to the regeneration of society, the assumption is everywhere made that labour must for ever be unattractive.

It is through no disrespect to the other writers in this remarkable book that I have given so much of my space to the consideration of Mr. Sydney Webb's paper, which is rather worse than better than the others, but simply because it shows most clearly the present position of the Fabian Society towards the Socialist movement.

Mr. Clarke's paper, though not quite avoiding the historical mistake of Mr. Sydney Webb, is clear and well written, and full of very valuable information; the latter portion, dealing with the special vagaries of American "Commerce," will serve as a text-book for the subject "until the times do alter." At the same time, though we may well hope that the extravagance of exploitation and contempt of the public shown by these "captains of industry" will lead us on toward Socialism, it is dangerous to rest our hopes on this development, as Mr. Bellamy does in his 'Looking Backward.' It may, after all, be nothing but a passing phase of that capitalist organisation of robbery, which surely must be attacked in front by the workers grown conscious of their slavery.

Mr. Sydney Olivier's "Moral Basis" is worth taking the trouble of careful reading. It is less obvious to the objections against the Fabian opportunism, partly no doubt because of the subject, but also partly, I think (judging from the paper), because of the turn of mind of the writer himself.

Mr. Graham Wallas's "Property Under Socialism" is clear and free from pedantry, and shows distinct sympathies with Communism; but it is confessedly dealing with the transitional period of Social Democracy, and consequently lacks the interest which a paper on more definite principles would have. There is, indeed, a tone of apology for the feebleness of Social Democracy running through it which might be sneered at by the bourgeois. One friendly objection I make to Mr. Wallas—he allows himself to speak of Socialism as "the system of property-holding which we call Socialism," and goes on to say that this is not necessarily the wished-for new life, "any more than a good system of drainage is health, or the invention of printing, knowledge." Here is a net statement of the exaggeration of the value of a mechanical system, which I have already complained of. Socialism is emphatically not merely "a system of property-holding," but a complete theory of human life, founded indeed on the visible necessities of animal life, but including a distinct system of religion, ethics, and conduct, which, if put into practice, will not indeed enable us to get rid of the tragedy of life, as Mr. Wallas hints, but will enable us to meet it without fear and without shame.

Mrs. Besant's article on "Industry Under Socialism" gives a sketch of State Socialism in practice in its crudest form, which, owing to the difficulty of the subject rather than from any shortcoming on her part, is not satisfactory,—could hardly be satisfactory to any one.

Mr. Hubert Bland's paper, "On the Outlook," is, for this book, a curious one, for it is a not very indirect attack on his optimistic democratic coadjutors. "It is not so much to the thing which the state does, as to the end for which it does it," is stating again what I have already put forward in this article, and there is a good deal in Mr. Bland's "Outlook" to the same purport. For the rest, Mr. Bland, of course, goes in for the Parliamentary struggle which we do not believe in; but he is too acute (his eye-sight being aided, I judge, by some traditional Tory instincts) not to see that the permeation of the Radicals by Socialism does not mean the creation of a Socialist-Radical Parliamentary party, but rather the absorption of the individuals of the Radicals, on the one hand, into the definite Socialist ranks, and, on the other, into the Whig phalanx; which latter, he, very rightly, looks on as a most formidable and enduring body of obstruction, capable of "holding the fort" long after the intelligence of the nation has declared for Socialism, and of holding it in the teeth of the logical sequence of economical events. So goes history.

I have yet to mention Mr. Bernard Shaw's two papers. Whatever I have to blame in them is comprised in the statement of my differences with the Fabian tactic which is so frankly condemned by Mr. Hubert Bland. Yet, at least, Mr. Shaw does not love opportunism for its own sweet self; for in his second lecture he definitely proclaims his shame of the course to which, as he thinks, circumstances have driven him; perhaps he only needs a little extra dose of Parliamentary tactics to disgust him so much as to force him to drop them altogether. Judging from the eloquence of the concluding part of his first paper, we can hardly suppose that that disgust will drive him into despair of the whole movement, and so deprive us of the services of one of the clearest heads and best pens that Socialism has got. As aforesaid, his criticism of the modern capitalistic muddle is so damaging, his style so trenchant, and so full of reserves of indignation and righteous scorn, that I sometimes wonder that *guilty*, i.e., non-Socialist, middle-class people can sit and listen to him. If he could only forget the Sydney-Webbian permeation tactic, even without putting any other in its place, what an advantage it would be to all of us! He would encourage his friends thereby; and as to his enemies—could he offend them more than he does now?

I have not had any space to quote passages from this book; I thought that there was no need to do so, as I assume that all Socialists will read it whether they agree with it or not. WILLIAM MORRIS.

IN PARIS.

We shall soon have some new elections in and about Paris, as about half-a-dozen Boulangist deputies' elections have been invalidated on account of not being on the side of the bourgeois Republic. I should let this pass by unrecorded as being without interest for us Socialists, who don't care a damn who gets in or out of Parliament, but it furnishes a good opportunity to study the different schools of Socialism we have here. As internationalists it is good for us to know our men in case we want them.

Any foreigner coming to Paris is sure to meet good Socialists here so long as he speaks to the point, that is, as long as he does not wander away from his programme or principles; but if he takes to politics he is nearly sure to fall out with them. Although we have half-a-dozen schools at ordinary times, at the polls we have but two, or rather none at all; one school, the *Parti ouvrier*, is swallowed up by the Government; the other, the Blanquist school, goes with Boulanger.

There are, of course, parties that remain independent, such as the *Ligue Socialiste*, which has *L'Égalité* as their daily paper; the party of Vaillant, which is without a paper since the *Cri du Peuple* stopped; the Anarchists, again, whose weekly paper is *La Révolte*. Staunch revolutionaries as these three last schools may be, they are accused of voting for Boulangists.

It is a known fact that the *Parti ouvrier*, 25,000 strong in Paris, with nine town councillors and one and a-half deputies—one and a-half because Joffrin is no deputy in reality, being "elected" by the government in the place of Boulanger, who got 3,000 majority over him; the whole one being Dumay, who has done good work in former years. It is a known fact, I say, that this party get secret money to play the game of the government. In their opinion all who are not with them are with Boulanger; not being able to keep to their own guns, they see a traitor in any man outside of their ranks. They do not understand a man standing aloof from their petty miseries.

They are rather strong in Paris, where the *Bourse du Travail* is in their hands, but are nowhere in the country. It is not so easy to make friends there, as the municipality of Paris, on which nine of them are sitting, cannot give situations outside of the town, and therefore cannot corrupt the country.

I fell into the hands of these men when I came to Paris as a delegate to the International (Possibilist) Congress, and I confess that I regret it ever since. They are Nationalists, and as much so as are Irishmen. Their ostensible programme is, "Emancipation of the toiler by the toiler himself," but they should add, "with the gracious help of His Majesty Carnot and the Bourgeois Republic."

Between these Socialists and those who intended to make a good use of Boulanger's triumph by taking hold of the Government at the first opportunity, we have about 15,000 Anarchists, who are recruited from among the most intelligent and sensible workmen here. They do not vote, but they make more recruits at the present time than any other school. While there are lots of Socialists who waver between the Opportunists, the *Parti ouvrier*, and the Boulangists, once a man becomes an Anarchist he usually remains there. They are promoting now the idea of a general European strike, which, if it comes off, will about finish the present delightful system of societies.

The *Ligue Socialiste* is a combination of discontented and practical Socialists. It was erected on the ruins of the *Cri du Peuple*. Its members are all young and ardent men, who would not feel at home with such veterans as Vaillant and Jules Guesde. One of them, Odin, is to be prosecuted for a speech he delivered a few weeks ago in Nantes. Chirac is another rising man. The *Ligue Socialiste* is to French Socialism what Sandhurst is to the English army. Its paper is *l'Égalité*, which was started by Jules Roques, a capitalist, and doubtful Socialist. The League counts about a thousand members, and has been about a year in existence. It goes in for the *grève générale* (general strike); has no programme; and thinks of taking the *Elysée* by storm one day—a quite possible thing, if we consider the kind of men it is composed of.

Vaillant, Minister of Public Instruction under the Commune, and still a Communist, has joined Jules Guesde, the Collectivist of old fame, and in spite of all these different opinions and schools of which I have been speaking, all other chiefs would be cast into the shade in the hour of action, and Vaillant would be the rallying-point, in whose presence all differences would disappear. His name reflects a moral strength that cannot be denied. He is watching the first opportunity to strike a decisive blow. Delegates of the twenty arrondissements meet every week, and he never fails to be there also. He does not care to take the chair; he sits in the crowd, and always speaks to the point. He personifies Revolution, no doubt about it. Let the Government make a blunder, and we shall see Vaillant on the *Place de la Concorde*, and with him a hundred thousand revolutionaries of every school, who have descended from the heights of Montmartre and Belleville to strike a final blow at the cursed reign of the money-bag.

A big meeting assembled last week to protest against the arbitrary arrest of Bertoya, a Spanish student of twenty-four, who was arrested in the street, without any warning, by a *mouchard*, who couldn't even tell him for what reason it was done. The reason is, that Bertoya is a Socialist, who has been expelled already from Germany, Italy, France, and probably from Belgium, on account of his opinions and propaganda.

Before the opening of the meeting, one heard all the different languages of Europe—Italian, German, Russian, Greek, etc.: it was a truly international meeting. A Greek student was the first speaker, and he protested strongly against this disgraceful persecution, saying, however, that it was a sure sign that governments must feel their own decay when they resorted to such means as these. Citizen Brunel said they should not protest in words only, but should try to make their words good by their works; which sentiment was received with vigorous applause, waving of hats, and many curses against law-and-order as carried out in this grand country of freedom, where every man has a vote, where idlers have a carefully guarded right to live without producing, and where every poor man has the right and many opportunities to starve while working. Hurrah for the Bourgeois Republic!

A. COULON.

Paris, 19th Jan., 1890.

It would be absurd, amongst any people, to regard as just all that the laws sanction. Would the Athenians have been more equitable if they had ratified the decrees of their thirty tyrants?—Cicero.

THE LABOUR STRUGGLE.

The Gas-stokers' Strike.

The struggle is still as dogged as ever. The Seamen and Firemen's Union is nearly every day drawing men out from coal ships that supply the company, and on the whole the strikers have still a fair chance of winning. The gas-stokers' treasurer, William Byford, writing to the *Star* on Friday, Jan. 17, states that funds are coming in well, despite the lying statements that have been circulated in the capitalist press. He says, "The strike which has now lasted five weeks, was forced upon us by Mr. Livesey, and has cost up to the present over £5,000. This has been met somewhat by a levy upon our members, whom, I am glad to say, have responded nobly. We have paid the strikers 10s. a week and 5s. extra Christmas week, and I am pleased to state that instead of our funds being done and our society in a deplorable condition, the funds were never better. Last week our own income was over £800; this week up to date it is over £500. Independent of outside support, which is coming in very well just now, we paid our strikers last week without calling on our bankers, and are prepared to do the same next week." This statement, and, indeed, the whole history of the strike shows that the new trade unionism is not so deficient in staying power as some of its enemies thought. The gas-stokers, unlike the dockers, have received very little outside support, and yet this strike has been fought with as much strength and determination as any struggle in the history of the older trade unions. Should the men even be defeated, they have still done enough to show that the new trade unions can make a good fight without showers of gold from an enthusiastic public.

The strikers have had another opportunity of admiring the administration of middle-class justice. Two blacklegs were charged at the Central Criminal Court this week with shooting strikers. One of them, Alfred Newgrove, has been let off altogether; the other, Charles Higgins, a black man, was discharged upon entering on his recognisances to come up for judgment when called upon. If a striker had shot a blackleg I wonder if he would have got off as easily! It is a wonder that the judge and the middle-class jury, in their enthusiasm for the amiable eccentricities of these gentlemen, did not present them with a valuable testimonial as a proof of their approval—a silver-plated revolver with an injunction to make good use of it would be most suitable.

It is rather surprising, after these examples of middle-class justice, to find that Henry Weir was also only bound over to appear for judgment when called upon. But there are several explanations of this extraordinary leniency; first, it is probable that it struck the judge that it would be rather too absurd to send a man to prison for advising people to kill Mr. Livesey, when blacklegs had been let off for actually trying to kill people; secondly, the judge, Mr. Justice Hawkins, had doubtless exhausted his superfluous stock of severity upon the editor of the *North London Press* the day before, and was therefore in a pretty good humour.

The funniest feature of the case was the "evidence" of the police "short-hand" writer. This gentleman admitted that he was not a "professional," also that he would not swear positively as to whether the prisoner had said that Mr. Livesey had no right or no moral right to live; and finally, he admitted that since the meeting he had made several "alterations" in his short-hand notes, and had "struck out" some portions of them. Nice evidence to convict any one upon! When a policeman adds "short-hand" to his natural vices, he evidently becomes more unreliable in his "evidence" than ever.

There has been another interview between Mr. Livesey and a deputation of gas-stokers, but the interview has had no result. The good gentleman complained bitterly of the trouble and expense to which he had been put by the action of the Coal Porters' and Sailors and Firemen's Unions. We hear on good authority that some 17 coal ships have lost their crews through the pickets of the last-named union, and poor Mr. Livesey has had to partially fill up their places with blacklegs, for whom he has had to pay very dearly. He was, however, in spite of this annoyance, good enough to offer, if the men would make a total surrender, to take "some" of them back. This proposition being afterwards submitted to a mass meeting of the men, was unanimously rejected amid cries of "Fight it out to the bitter end." The demonstration held in Hyde Park on Sunday, showed by its numbers and enthusiasm that the men are determined to resist to the last. There was a large attendance of police, and their "short-hand" writers were very busy "reporting" the speeches. Mr. Livesey is finding that "smashing the union" is not so easy as he thought.

Strike of Wharfmen.

A strike broke out at several wharves in Bermondsey Friday morning, January 17, the men demanding three-quarters of an hour for dinner, and that they shall be paid for it. On Friday night Tom Mann, who represented the workers, had an interview with Captain Davis, one of the directors, at Wilson and Simmons', who conceded the men's demands, but stipulated that the agreement should only hold good till April 13th, when the whole question of payment for mealtimes should be thoroughly discussed. Mr. Morgan, secretary of the dock company, writes to the papers in a fit of virtuous indignation concerning the infraction of the famous agreement of the 14th September last by the men, one of the conditions of which, as our readers will remember, was that there should be no payment for mealtimes. But as Tom Mann explained, the agreement was never intended to be eternal. In fact by this time it has been nearly torn to pieces, as many of the workers at the docks and wharves have gained this concession. The men at Hay's Wharf are still out, but there is every hope of a speedy victory.

The East-end Tailors.

A crowded meeting of East-end tailors was held at Christ Church Hall, Hanbury Street, on Saturday January 18, to consider the breaking of the strike agreement by the masters. According to a statement made by Lewis Lyons at the meeting, two weeks had not passed from the signing of the agreement before some of the masters had broken it, and now the majority of them appear to have followed their example. It appears that the masters have issued a circular to the retail trade in which they stated that the cause which led to long hours had been abolished. The meeting passed a resolution stating that the statements in this circular were misleading and mischievous, and that they had resolved as early as possible to enforce the terms of the agreement by every legitimate means in their power; also calling upon merchant tailors, shopkeepers, and warehouses to open workshops of

their own, or else give their work out to fair houses. It was stated at the meeting that the agreement would be enforced if necessary by a general strike throughout London and the provinces.

Tram and Bus Men.

This union again seems in a bad way. There was a very small attendance at a torchlight meeting held at Stratford Broadway on Saturday morning, owing, it is said, to the men being warned against attending the meeting by the company's officials. This may be so; but similar warnings have been issued before and haven't had much effect. It is probable that the weakness shown by the officials of the union towards the Road Car Co.—which has set them at defiance, broken their agreement, and discharged union men, while the union officials have borne it as meekly as lambs—has had more to do with it. The fact is that the union officials, two months ago, when the Road Car men were ready to strike, allowed the decisive moment to go by. The consequence is that the men have lost heart, and do not care to risk their places for a union that will do nothing for them. Mr. Sutherland, the president of the union, has now evidently given up all idea of organised action on the part of the men, and has prepared a "twelve hours per day bill" for Parliament. A lot of good that will do, even if it passes, though there is not much chance of that. Of what use is a union which can only prepare bills for Parliament? No wonder the men have lost all enthusiasm for such a miserable sham.

Trouble at Billingsgate.

There is a row at Billingsgate. The fish porters have had enough of being sweated by various fishing companies, and on one of the union men being discharged on Saturday morning, January 18, the union men started work on their own account for the buyers, securing half the work of the market, and receiving the full reward of their labour. The companies replied on Monday by posting the following notice on all the wholesale forms: "The undersigned companies hereby give notice that on and after the 20th inst. all fish sold over their forms will be under the sole control of the company until delivered to the stand or vehicle of the buyer, and is only sold on these conditions. This means that the buyers must not employ union labour for themselves, but must have their fish carried by the blacklegs employed by the companies. On Saturday the companies showed they meant boycotting by refusing the bid of Mr. B. Hotine, one of the largest salesmen in Billingsgate, because he employed union men. The men have issued a manifesto, calling upon the buyers to support them in the struggle, and pointing out that the blacklegs do not know their business and are therefore likely to cause them delay and annoyance.

N.

MR. AUBERON HERBERT ON MARRIAGE.

THE following letter was addressed by Mr. Auberon Herbert to the editor of the *Pall Mall*, in reply to some very reactionary utterances of the "family altar" type, which the *Pall Mall* had quoted with admiration:

A few days ago the *Pall Mall Gazette* quoted from a speech of Professor Murray about Mr. Parnell. Personally I have never admired the fashion or the spirit of the Irish leading. I have seen in it the same deep taint that I see in the modern Liberal party, as a party. Irish patriots have been manufactured wholesale at the price of 20 to 30 per cent.—or whatever the percentage may be—of reduced rents; just as modern Radicals are manufactured at the price of free education, taxation of land, and the promise of State services at the cost of owners of property. In neither case do I believe the product worth the producing. Having said this, and having separated myself from admiration of Mr. Parnell's leading, I wish to protest most strongly against Professor Murray's manner of speaking about Mr. Parnell. It breathes that deep unconscious hypocrisy which pervades almost all of us in this matter; especially those who, with a very slight knowledge or understanding of their own human nature, proceed to denounce their fellow men. Men safely moored in the haven of marriage sit in sublime judgment upon those who are moved by their passions in the irregular and unhappy ways that lie outside marriage. Do not think I am upholding the state of no marriage as against the state of marriage. I deeply reverence the state of true marriage—by which I mean the faithful continuous attachment of two people to each other, without any legal restraint to perpetuate that attachment, when its inner life has departed—but I say that this true marriage is the concern of the two people themselves, and not the concern of the world outside them. It always seems to me a deep unconscious hypocrisy on the part of the happily married people when they revile either the transgressions of the unmarried or a transgression such as that of which Mr. Parnell is accused. I am not minimising these transgressions. They are generally sins against one's own sense of honour and truth and constancy; they are departures from high ideals; they are acts of high treason against one's own happiness and the happiness of those involved; but I deny utterly they are the concern of the outside world, and it is just as impertinent of Professor Murray to comment upon Mr. Parnell's relations with Mrs. O'Shea, in the high tragic line of a betrayed Ireland, as it would be impertinent for me to comment publicly upon his own ill-natured treatment of his wife or his severity towards his children—if he is married, and if I had any reason to believe in either of these things, which most certainly I have not—as obstacles to our confidence in him as a trustworthy Liberal or a trustworthy Conservative. A great deal of this kind of talk comes from the shallow soil in which Liberal principles of the present day are grown. Women are to vote, to be lawyers, doctors, and so forth; but they are not to be treated as the real owners, with all the consequences, of their own selves. The modern Liberal, in this respect, is often like the Paris husband, who buys a revolver for twenty francs and dramatically shoots his wife, if she has betrayed him, amidst the half-suppressed applause of other Paris husbands. A sense of property in the wife—joined, of course, in France to the intense *amour propre* or vanity that has been injured—is at the bottom of the shooting, just as with us it is at the bottom of that foul creation the divorce court and its money damages. No fouler institution was ever invented; and its existence drags on, to our deep shame, just because we have not the courage frankly to say that the sexual relations of husband and wife, or those who live together, concern their own selves, and do not concern the prying, gloating, self-righteous, and intensely untruthful world outside them. What Mr. Parnell was as a political leader, that he remains to-day.

His faults are not increased ; his virtues as leader are not diminished. That he may or may not have sinned against a woman's happiness and self-respect, and against his own happiness and self-respect, are matters that affect him and her, and not his political followers. If the Irish party allow him to be cast on one side—if they allow him to be sacrificed to Catholic jealousies—they will indeed barb the saying, that has been more than once pointed against them, that they cannot be well served because they betray their leaders.

THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE.

OFFICES : 24, GREAT QUEEN ST., LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS, W.C.

The Offices of the Socialist League will be open for the sale of *Commonweal* and all other Socialist publications from 8.30 a.m. to 9 p.m. every day except Sunday. The Secretary will be in attendance from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily.

Executive.—At the Council meeting on Jan. 20th, it was resolved to protest against the attempts made by the capitalist press to obtain a public ovation for the filibuster Stanley upon his return.

Commonweal Branch.—The Hall at 24, Great Queen Street, will be open to all Members of the League every evening from 7.30 to 10 p.m. Daily papers, games, and refreshments. Members must show their cards to the steward. Lectures and dramatic readings every Sunday evening at 8 p.m. For particulars of the new *Commonweal* Branch, now forming, address F. Kitz, 24, Great Queen Street, London, W.C.

Branch Subscriptions Paid.—1888 :—Oxford, to end of September.

1889 :—Bradford and Hammersmith, to end of April. Norwich, Glasgow, and Yarmouth, to end of May. Manchester, to end of September. Clerkenwell and East London, to end of October. North London, and Mitcham, to end of November. St. Georges East, and Leicester, to end of December. 1890 :—North Kensington, to end of January.

Notice to Branch Secretaries.—Please remit to Central Office your Branch Capitation fees as soon as possible.

Notice.—All letters on League business, except those intended for Editors of *Commonweal*, to be addressed to me. No other person is authorised to sign any official communication.

FRANK KITZ, Secretary.

NEW PREMISES FUND.

Collected at Council meeting, Jan. 20th, 3s. 6½d.

"COMMONWEAL" GUARANTEE FUND.

The following further sums have been received towards this fund :—Webb, 1s.; H. R., 1s.; Mrs. Schack, 1s.; M. M., 5s.; F. Kitz, 6d.; D. Nicoll, 6d.; B. W., 6d.; J. W. Brunne, £1 1s.; and C. Saunders, 2s.

REPORTS.

NORTH KENSINGTON.—Fair meeting at Latimer Road on Sunday morning ; speakers Maughan Crouch, Dean, and A. J. Smith. Comrade Albert Tarn lectured in the evening on "Capital, Money, and Interest" ; many questions and good debate. Collected 2s. 6d. *Commonweal* sold out.

LEEDS.—On Sunday morning at Vicars Croft a meeting was held, when Rogers spoke to an attentive audience. At night, in the Socialist League Hall, Samuels lectured on "Socialism, Old and New" to a good audience ; spirited discussion. *Commonweal* went well, also 'Appeal to the Young.'

LEICESTER.—Good meeting in Russell Square, addressed by Taylor and Chambers ; audience very attentive and sympathetic. On Monday, a lively discussion on "Communal Life," which was adjourned until Thursday.

MANCHESTER.—We held two meetings on Sunday, despite unfavourable weather. At Phillips Park in the morning, Stockton, Barton, and Bailie addressed a meeting ; in the afternoon, the same speakers held a meeting in Stevenson Square. About 40 *Commonweal* sold.

DUBLIN.—At Progressist Club, 87 Marlboro' Street, Jan. 18th, A. Kavanagh lectured on "Practical Legislation," advocating land nationalisation, eight hours, etc., etc. The views of the lecturer were forcibly assailed by Wilson, Regan, O'Gorman, and Fitzpatrick.

SHEFFIELD.—The labour movement in Sheffield is rapidly developing. Good meetings are held every Tuesday evening at Hallamshire Hall, and on Wednesday and Thursday evenings in other parts of the town. We are also getting good meetings at the above hall every Sunday. On Sunday January 12, comrade Sketchley lectured, in the morning at 11, subject, "The Labour Movement" ; and in the evening at 6.30, subject, "The Land Question." On Sunday Jan. 19, morning at 11, subject, "The Labour Movement" ; and in the evening at 6.30, subject, "Socialism—What it is." Admission is free, and discussion invited. The organisation is extending every week. Socialist literature on sale at the hall.—S.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE !

How is it that the *Commonweal* does not publish more news from the Branches ? Because the editor is not omniscient, and the local secretaries forget that he depends upon them for news. Hint : Let us know what you're doing.

How is it that not all that is sent is inserted ? Because branch secretaries forget that the editor has less than a thousand hands, and often mix things so that it would mean entirely re-writing their letters before they could be of use. Hint : Keep reports separate from announcements, and news from both. Write briefly, plainly, and on one side of the paper.

LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST SOCIETY, 1 Stanley Street, Dale Street.—Meets every Tuesday at 8 p.m.

EDINBURGH—SCOTTISH SOCIALIST FEDERATION.—In Moulders' Hall, High St., lecture on Sunday January 26, at 6.30, "The Politics of Burns."

CHELSEA S.D.F., Co-operative Lecture Hall, 312 Kings Road, Chelsea.—Sunday January 26, at 8 p.m., Harold Cox, "The Eight Hours Question."

MANHOOD SUFFRAGE LEAGUE, "Three Doves," Berwick St., Oxford St., W.—Sunday January 26, at 8.30 p.m., F. Pinnock, "Labour's Social Warfare."

WEST KENSINGTON PARK RADICAL CLUB, 80 Faroe Road, West Kensington.—Sunday January 26, at 8 p.m., Graham Wallas, "Practicable Socialism for Great Britain."

SHEFFIELD.—At Hallamshire Hall, Westbar, on Sunday January 26, J. Sketchley, 11 a.m., "The Labour Movement at Home and Abroad" ; at 6.30, "The Claims of Capital and Labour from a Socialistic Standpoint."

A MASS MEETING, to protest against the buying-out of Irish landlords, will be held (under the auspices of the E.L.R.L.) at St. James's Hall, Piccadilly, on Tuesday Jan. 28, at 8 p.m. Michael Davitt, John Burns, and others will speak.

LECTURE DIARY.

LONDON.

Battersea.—All communications to E. Buteux, 20 Abercrombie Street, Battersea Park Road.

Commonweal Branch.—24 Great Queen Street, Holborn, W.C. Business meeting of members every Thursday evening at 8. Lectures every Sunday at 8 p.m. Hall open every evening from 7 till 10.30 to all members of the League ; cards of membership must be produced to steward of branch on entering. Entertainments on last Sunday of every month. Membership : 6d. entrance fee and 6d. per month.

East London.—Crown Coffee Tavern, 2 Columbia Road, Hackney Road.

Hammersmith.—Kclmscott House, Upper Mall, W. Sunday Jan. 26, at 8 p.m., George Bernard Shaw, "The New Politics."

Merton.—3 Clare Villas, Merton Road.

Mitcham.—"Lord Napier," Fair Green. Meets every Sunday at 12.30, to enroll members, etc.

North Kensington.—Clarendon Coffee Palace, Clarendon Road. Meets every Wednesday at 8 p.m. On Sunday evening, Jan. 26, a lecture by W. L. Phillips, "Labour and Socialism."

North London.—6 Windmill Street, Tottenham Court Road. Meets every Wednesday evening at 8 o'clock. D. J. Nicoll lectures Wednesday Jan. 29, on "Law and Order."

Southwark.—Secretary, George Evans, 56 Lucy Road, Bermondsey, S.E. Hill's Coffee Tavern, Great Charlotte Street, Blackfriars Road, S.E.

Streatham.—Meets every Thursday at the "Leighham Arms," Wellfield Road, at 8.30 p.m.

Whitechapel and St. Georges in the East.—Branch meetings at International Club, 40 Berner Street, Commercial Road. J. Turner, organising secretary.

PROVINCES.

Aberdeen.—Organiser, J. Leatham, 7 Jamaica Street. Branch meets in Odd-fellows' Small Hall, Crooked Lane, on Monday evenings at 8. Singing practice at 46 Marischal Street on Thursdays at 8 p.m.

Bradford.—Laycock's Temperance Hotel, Albion Court, Kirkgate. Meets every Tuesday at 7.30.

Dundee.—Address to W. Cameron, 17 Laurence Street, Dundee.

Glasgow.—Ram's Horn Hall, 122 Ingram Street. Branch meets on Thursday evenings at 8 o'clock and Sundays at 7 o'clock.

Halifax.—Socialists meet every Sunday at 6.30 p.m. at Helliwell's Temperance Hotel, Northgate.

Leeds.—Clarendon Buildings, Victoria Road, School Close. Open every evening. Business meeting Saturdays at 8 p.m. Sunday January 26, at 7.30, lecture, S. Braithwaite, "Sir Lyon Playfair and the Labour Question."

Leicester.—Exchange Buildings, Rutland Street. Branch meets on Monday and Thursday, at 8 p.m.

Manchester.—Branch meets temporarily at the Secretary's, 52 Miller Street, on Tuesdays at 8 p.m.

Norwich.—Sunday, at 8, Gordon Hall. Tuesday, at 8.30, Members' meeting. Thursday, at 8, Discussion Class. Saturday, Social Meeting. Hall open every evening from 8 p.m.

Oxford.—Temperance Hall, 25½ Pembroke Street. First Friday in every month, at 8.30 p.m.

Walsall.—Socialist Club, 18 Goodall Street, Walsall. Meetings every night.

Yarmouth.—Branch meets at comrade Headley's, near Co-operative Stores, every Tuesday evening. Elocution Class Friday at 8 p.m. On Sunday afternoons during winter a Discussion Class will be held at 3 o'clock.

All persons who sympathise with the views of the Socialist League are earnestly invited to communicate with the above addresses, and if possible to help us in preparing for the birth of a true society, based on equality, brotherhood, and freedom for all.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

SATURDAY 25.

8.30..... Mile-end Waste Cores and Presburg

SUNDAY 26.

11..... Latimer Road Station Maughan, Dean, and Crouch

11.30..... Kilburn—"Old Plough," Kilburn Lane Mainwaring, Cores

11.30..... Commercial Road—Union Street Cores

11.30..... Mitcham—Fair Green The Branch

11.30..... Regent's Park Cantwell and Nicoll

11.30..... Southwark—Flat Iron Square The Branch

3.30..... Hyde Park—Marble Arch Cantwell and Nicoll

3.30..... Victoria Park The Branch

7..... Weltje Road, Ravenscourt Park Hammersmith Branch

7.30..... Walham Green—back of Church Hammersmith Branch

TUESDAY 28.

8..... Walham Green—back of Church Hammersmith Branch

THURSDAY 30.

8.15..... Hoxton Church The Branch

PROVINCES.

Glasgow.—Sunday : Jail Square at 2 o'clock ; Paisley Road at 5 o'clock. Tuesday : Cathedral Square, at 8 p.m.

Leeds.—Sunday : Hunslet Moor, at 11 a.m. ; Vicar's Croft, at 7 p.m.

Manchester.—Sunday : Philips Park Gates, at 11 ; Stevenson Square, at 3.

Norwich.—Sunday : St. Faiths, at 11 ; Market Place, at 3.

Sheffield.—Sunday : Monolith, Fargate, at 11 a.m. ; Gower Street, at 3 p.m. ; Pump, Westbar, 8 p.m.

Yarmouth.—Sunday : Priory Plain, at 11 ; Colman's Granary Quay, at 7.

To Help the Paper.—There are several ways in which you can help to spread the 'Weal. Ask your newsagent to try and sell it. Get those who don't care to buy it week by week to subscribe direct. Arrange for the posting of contents bills anywhere you can. Any number of other plans will suggest themselves if you think about it.

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TWENTIETH CENTURY.

HUGH O. PENTECOST, EDITOR.
T. L. M'CREADY, ASSOCIATE EDITOR.

Each number contains the Address of the preceding Sunday, delivered by the Editor in Newark, Brooklyn, and New York.

Motto: "Hear the other side."

THIS Journal advocates Personal Sovereignty in place of State Sovereignty, Voluntary Co-operation as opposed to Compulsory Co-operation, the Liberation of the human mind from Superstition, and the application of the principles of Ethics toward Social Regeneration.

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Some Contributors.

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STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES.

THE Socialist League advocates International Revolutionary Socialism. That is to say the destruction of the present class society, which consists of one class who live by owning property and therefore *need not work*, and of another that has no property and therefore *must work* in order that they may live to keep the idlers by their labour. Revolutionary Socialism insists that this system of society, which is the modern form of slavery, should be changed to a system of Society which would give every man an opportunity of doing useful work, and not allow any man to live without so doing, which work could not be useful unless it were done for the whole body of workers instead of for do-nothing individuals. The result of this would be that livelihood would not be precarious nor labour burdensome. Labour would be employed in co-operation, and the struggle of man with man for bare subsistence would be supplanted by harmonious combination for the production of common wealth and the exchange of mutual services without the waste of labour or material.

Every man's needs would be satisfied from this common stock, but no man would be allowed to own anything which he could not *use*, and which consequently he must *abuse* by employing it as an instrument for forcing others to labour for him unpaid. Thus the land, the capital, machinery, and means of transit would cease to be private property, since they can only be *used* by the combination of labour to produce wealth.

Thus men would be *free* because they would no longer be dependent on idle property-owners for subsistence; thus they would be *brothers*, for the cause of strife, the struggle for subsistence at other people's expense, would have come to an end. Thus they would be *equal*, for if all men were doing useful work no man's labour could be dispensed with. Thus the motto of Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality, which is but an empty boast in a society that upholds the monopoly of the means of production, would at last be realised.

This Revolutionary Socialism must be International. The change which would put an end to the struggle between man and man, would destroy it also between nation and nation. One harmonious system of federation throughout the whole of civilisation would take the place of the old destructive rivalries. There would be no great centres breeding race hatred and commercial jealousy, but people would manage their own affairs in communities not too large to prevent all citizens from taking a part in the administration necessary for the conduct of life, so that party politics would come to an end.

Thus, while we abide by the old motto: **Liberty, Fraternity, Equality**, we say that the existence of private property destroys Equality, and therefore under it there can be neither Liberty nor Fraternity.

We add to the first motto then this other one—

FROM EACH ACCORDING TO HIS CAPACITY, TO EACH ACCORDING TO HIS NEEDS.

When this is realised there will be a genuine Society; until it is realised, Society is nothing but a band of robbers. We must add that this change can only be brought about by combination amongst the workers themselves, and must embrace the whole of Society. The new life cannot be *given* to the workers by a class higher than they, but must be *taken* by them by means of the abolition of classes and the reorganisation of Society.

COUNCIL OF THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE.

NOTICE.

Subscribers who find a red mark against this notice are thereby reminded that their subscriptions have expired and must be renewed immediately if they wish to continue to receive *Commonweal*.

Printed in the Socialist League Printery, and published in the name and on behalf of the Socialist League by FRANK KITZ at 24 Great Queen St., Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, W.C.